

## Sermon on the Christmas Mystery

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*Reprinted from Orate Fratres (Collegeville, Minn.), December, 1932.*

THE holy season of Advent is past; on the part of the zealous Christian it meant intense longing and eager preparation for the coming of Him who is "the Desired of nations." During the first prolonged Advent the just of the Old Testament had but one yearning: "Send, O Lord, Him who is to come"; they had but one desire: to behold with their eyes the countenance of the Saviour of Israel. All their prayers were summed up in this prayer of Isaias: "Send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the Ruler of the earth. Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One; let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour." In short, the promised Messias was the object towards which converged all the hopes, all the worship, all the religion of the Old Covenant.

We, who walk in the light of Him who came upon this earth nineteen hundred and thirty-three years ago, have during Advent longed and prepared for the reception of that grace which He merited by His nativity. And what is this sublime grace? It is a participation in the divine nature of Him, who by His Incarnation deigned to take upon Himself our human nature; in other words, this amiable Saviour desires to come into each one of us and to transform us, if we but will, into Himself, so that henceforth we may live, not we, but He in us. For no other reason did Christ come than to make us divine in Himself, for He well knows that we can only be pleasing to His heavenly Father inasmuch as He sees within us His Son Jesus Christ.

After the Offertory of the first Mass today the Church prays for this grace in the words: "Grant, O Lord, that the oblation which we offer in today's festival may be acceptable unto Thee, and, by Thy grace, through this most sacred and holy intercourse, we may be found like unto Him in whom is our substance united to Thee."

What a sublime grace is in store for us if we but celebrate this glorious mystery in the spirit of the Church! No wonder that a sort of heavenly joy pervades the entire

Christmas season. It is the same joy that was heralded during the first Christmas night by the angels in these words: "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David" (Gospel of the first Mass). This message is the happiest that was ever brought from heaven upon the earth; in fact, it is the beginning of all true happiness that will in the course of ages fill the hearts of countless millions of men. For does it not embody the deepest meaning of the Christmas mystery: Redemption, salvation, fellowship with God by His grace and mercy? Well may we exclaim with the Church in deep admiration and wonderment: "O great mystery, O admirable work of grace" (second Nocturn of Christmas)! It manifests itself on this lowly planet earth; it is the appearing of God among men, the great mystery with which the Lord inaugurates His work of the Redemption of mankind.

Even as in the cold, dreary winter season we wait and yearn for life, which under the sun's influence will sprout from winter's death, so did life sprout out of the long and cold winter of the first Advent, when the Sun of Justice appeared and radiated warmth upon the cold earth. The world steeped in sin, misery and gloom, beholds its Saviour. He comes as a weak child in a cold winter night, bringing us peace and love. Out of death sprouted life; out of sin, grace; out of sinful self-seeking, charity for the happiness of others.

Life, divine life, eternal life is the burden of this glorious feast. Let us in spirit behold the Child lying in the manger. Although to human eyes this Child appears only a son of Adam like unto us, faith tells us this Child is God's own Son. This divine Sonship is solemnly proclaimed in the Introit of the midnight Mass, in the words, "The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee." What an ineffable mystery! The eternal Son of God, of the same divine substance with the Father, God of God, Light of Light, by whom all things were made, is beheld by human eyes, incarnate, lying in a manger! "And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us: and we saw His glory, as it were the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Gospel of the third Mass).

God began to possess human life that we might share in His divine life. In exchange for the humanity which He takes, Christ lets us participate in His divinity. In other words, Christ, the second Adam, restores to us what the first Adam had lost through his sin of disobedience to God's command. In this new born Babe of Bethlehem are laid up all the treasures of the Divinity; in Him "dwelleth all the fulness of the God corporeally." It is His and His Father's will that this divine life be imparted to all men of good will, that all should be made in Him the children of His Father and heirs of heaven. Therefore St. Paul writes: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons." For this reason we pray in the Postcommunion of the third Mass, that "as the Saviour of the world born on this day is the author of our divine generation, so He may Himself also be to us the giver of immortality."

Being children of God through Christ, we naturally also lay claim to immortality, to eternal life. The germ of eternal life was deposited in us at the baptismal font when we were given supernatural life. It is this new life which also made us children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, worthy of one day partaking of His beatitude and glory without end. This supernatural life is strengthened by all good works, which make us more pleasing to God, above all by the worthy reception of Holy Communion.

How eager must we not be to free ourselves, once and for all, from everything that can lessen or even destroy the divine life within us, from sin, namely, wherefrom Christ comes to deliver us! In the Epistle, read in the midnight Mass, St. Paul exhorts us as follows: "Dearly beloved: The grace of God Our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly and justly and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and Our Saviour Jesus Christ." "O Christian," exclaims Pope St. Leo in a sermon preached at Rome on Christmas Day, "recognize thy dignity. And made a partaker of the Divinity, take care not to fall back from so sublime a state." May the words of the Gospel read in the third Mass today never apply to any one of us: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." He is the

Head, we are the members. Oh, with what faith and trust should we not receive this Child of God with whom we are forever being born more and more to the supernatural life, for the birth of the Head involves that of the members. Should we, therefore, not during this holy season “abound in good works” (Collect of the Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity) and prove to the world that we are “born of God and become His children” (Gospel of the Mass for Christmas Day)? Must it not be our ambition to have the words, which the heavenly Father addressed to His divine Son, also apply to us: “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee”; again, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”?

Let us then draw near to the divine Saviour with great faith and confidence. He said: “Behold I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear my voice and open to me the door, I will come in to him.” He eagerly desires to enter into our hearts in Holy Communion and to infuse divine life into us. “He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life.” By the worthy reception of the Bread of Life He will let us participate in this wondrous Christmas mystery and give to our soul the pledge of that blessed immortality of which He is the author, of which grace is the germ, and eternal bliss and glory the completion. “Grant we beseech Thee, almighty God, that as the Saviour of the world born on this day is the author of our divine generation, so He may Himself also be to us the giver of immortality” (Postcommunion of the third Mass). Amen.

## Anglicanism—Merely a Schism?

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*Reprinted from the Month. (London), November, 1933.*

THERE is no heresy more widespread in Christendom today than that which is the actual source of its lamentable divisions, viz., the denial of the essential unity and uniqueness of the Church—the organization originally created by God Incarnate and endowed by Him with inerrancy and perpetuity. There are multitudes of Christians, schismatical and heretical, who reject that dogma. Over

against them stands the changeless teaching of the Catholic Faith—that there can be only one true Church, and that its members, too, must needs be one in belief, worship and government. To deny this is also to deny that Our Lord abides with His Church for ever, keeping her united, and that the Holy Spirit teaches her all truth, making her inerrant. And the schismatics and the heretics are compelled by the necessity of their position to deny; some holding that from some lack of power or provision, Christ's attempt to found a permanent Church failed, or even that He never meant to found a Church at all; others, juggling with theories of the Church, and persuading themselves that, though real, the Church is invisible, or that she embraces all Christians, however varied in rule and organization, or contradictory in belief and practice. Divine Truth, they say, is too vast to be confined to any one Body: it has to be shared by many through whose union alone, complementing or correcting, it can be fully known. The "Holy Catholic Church" of their creeds is the sum of all these fragments. Clearly, the unity of Christendom can never be regained so long as sincere and earnest men hold these illogical views.

Yet the scandal of dissent, through the mercy of God, increasingly oppresses these dissidents, and the longing for unity grows. Gone is the complacency with which the first sectaries each set up a private tabernacle in utter scorn of the visible organized Church. To those who think, the embattled hosts of atheism whose single aim is the overthrow of faith in God, form a further motive to close the Christian ranks before the clash comes. It is, therefore, of the very first importance to secure a general agreement about the nature of Christ's Church. For lack of this the imposing "World Conference on Faith and Order," assembled to discuss Christian reunion at Lausanne in 1927, finally issued in failure. It indeed formally discussed the "Nature of the Church," yet, since none of the hundred divergent sects then present could be excluded from Church membership, no workable definition was reached. Moreover, the question of Church Authority, the most vital of all since it is the basis and bond of unity, had to be expressly set aside, as likely to lead to endless contention. Until, therefore, all Christ's followers can settle amongst themselves what was Christ's purpose in founding His Church, and what was His

conception of her functions, and what powers and duties He entrusted to it, their aspirations for union must be vain. All that He meant to do is clearly set down in the New Testament: unhappily, not only do all “not obey the Gospel,” but very many do not even believe the Gospel. For them the Rationalists have destroyed the force of its witness, so they do not know what Christ intended. And they will not hear the Church, however she urges, *importune, opportune*, her divine claims.

She may not, on that account, cease to proclaim her witness. “How can they hear without a preacher?” If Catholics could consistently have assisted at Lausanne, the Conference would not have broken up without learning what Catholics, having in view her Founder’s description and her historical development, conceive the Church to be. For we are alone in maintaining that she is a unique organization aptly compared by Christ to a Fold, that she teaches without ambiguity or consistency the whole divine revelation, and that she can never lose these characteristics of unity and authority. Otherwise God’s absolute guarantee of them would be made void, and she could neither fold nor feed the flock entrusted to her. History has justified our faith and realized Our Lord’s picture, for its records show that the rejection of Authority has been prolific in disunion: no other principle has been discovered, although incessantly sought for, capable of maintaining a consensus of belief in truths not attainable by reason and experiment. In no way can such unity be regained except by a return to the only method capable of producing it. A genuine desire for unity, therefore, is best tested by a readiness to consider what it requires—an authoritative center of teaching and government—and by a rejection of that principle of religious autonomy, which is its direct opposite, and which is most manifest in non-Episcopal bodies.

It is the fashion for Episcopal “Churches,” for those, at least, which claim unbroken Apostolical succession, to profess a theoretical regard for Authority, however little it affects practice. The early Church was so manifestly authoritarian, so stern in repressing heresy, so insistent on the obedience of faith, that anybody claiming continuity with the past must needs make some show of the like spirit. But it has always been merely show, not reality, and Episcopal “Churches”

have proved as fissiparous in matters of belief as any of the "Bible-only" sects. The primary aim of the Oxford Movement a century ago was to discover and re-assert in Anglicanism the principle of ecclesiastical authority. But all in vain. The English Church remains as essentially dependent on the Civil Power, which brought it originally into being and issued its Articles of Religion as a schedule to an Act of Parliament. Its Prayer Book, also, which, it is claimed, better expresses its real belief than do the Articles, needs the consent of Parliament both for lawful use and revision.<sup>1</sup> This may be merely negative control, but ever since 1833, when the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (a lay assembly) was made the Supreme Court of Appeal in ecclesiastical cases, the civil power has actually undertaken to define what doctrines Anglicans may hold. It is true that a section—but only a section—of the Establishment has always protested against this action of the Crown: the rest sees no incongruity in it, any more than did the first Elizabethan bishops.

It may be readily granted that the doctrine of the Royal Supremacy never meant that the Elizabethan Church's civil Governor claimed to be, like the Pope, the source of purely spiritual powers, such as the capacity to offer sacrifice, to forgive sins, to ordain priests, or consecrate bishops, for supernatural functions. This claim Elizabeth expressly disallowed. Still, on the other hand, the functionaries whom she appointed never laid claim, on their own account, to any such powers. Not a member of the Elizabethan hierarchy, although some of them were in valid priest's Orders, but would have repudiated the possession of the sacerdotium in the old Catholic sense. The new Ordinal was expressly framed to exclude such a possibility. Thus what the Crown did not claim, the bishops did not want. All they asked for was the Royal commission to exercise their episcopacy in the "new religion," which they had combined with the Queen's lay advisers to set up. The pre-Elizabethan Church got its

<sup>1</sup>Laud, without professing to decide "what power a lay assembly (and such a Parliament is) hath to determine matters of religion, and originally by and of themselves, before the Church hath first agreed upon them," concluded—"Then, indeed, they may confirm or refuse. And this course was held in the Reformation." ("Works," Vol. IV, part 1, p. 142.)

Orders and Jurisdiction from Rome: the Elizabethans dispensed with Orders and got jurisdiction from the Crown.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth, who could not confer Orders, did give jurisdiction, such jurisdiction as her Establishment required. To still all doubts, and to supply all defects, regarding the ecclesiastical status of Parker and his consecrators, she did not hesitate to issue through Parliament, "by our supreme royal authority," a revalidating decree.<sup>3</sup> Thus it is that the authority exercised by the officials of Anglicanism over its clergy and laity is radically a civil authority, however ecclesiastical it may seem. The bishops administer the Church law, commission incumbents and curates, inhibit on occasion unworthy clerics, take their due and important part in outwardly controlling the workings of that great and wealthy corporation which stands in the place of the old Catholic Church of England. But this authority of government, such as it is, is absolutely divorced from what is far more important—authority to teach: so much so that even official Anglicanism has often disclaimed any such authority. It is not a mark of their Church. Let an Archbishop of Canterbury declare what many other prelates have since echoed—"When the clergyman is in the pulpit, the layman is not bound by what is said in his hearing. The layman has a right to exercise his private judgment (*Charge of Archbishop Temple*, 1898). And, indeed, is not this "Note of Fallibility" implied in the XIXth Article which states that various Churches have erred in matters of faith—an Article which no Body, conscious of Christ's commission to teach, could ever have adopted? The new religion's abhorrence of Rome, its desire at all costs to mark its separation from Rome, led it thus to reject Rome's fundamental claim to interpret with certainty and to impose with authority God's revelation, even though the rejection nullified its own claim to represent the Church of Christ.

Unable to teach, powerless to tell its members with precision and finality the truth God wishes to convey to man-

<sup>2</sup>"We may trace a perfect tradition in the English Church to the effect of the validity of non-episcopal orders, through a while line of bishops, from Jewell in the commencement of Elizabeth's reign, through Whitgift, Bancroft, Andrews, Overall, Morton, and Cosin, who died some twelve years after the passing of the last Act of Uniformity (1662)." Child, "Church and State under the Tudors."

<sup>3</sup>P.R.O. Dom. Eliz. vii. No. 56.

kind through His Son, faced with this radical defect, Anglicanism has had recourse to the principle of Comprehensive-ness, a suicidal device which does not conceal its doctrinal impotence and which results not merely in the existence of three main beliefs—the Evangelical, the Sacerdotalist and the Modernist—within its boundaries, but in endless sub-divisions and combinations of the three. The principle is even elevated into an Essential Note, and attempts are also made to represent "Comprehensive" as equivalent to "Catholic," as if the inability to determine what is true were the same as the possession of the whole truth. Yet the glaring inconsistency of posing as part of the Church which Christ appointed to teach all nations, and yet not being able to expel from communion those who deny Christ's Divinity, or to decide whether the Eucharist is a real Sacrifice or a mere memorial service, has induced Anglican authorities to see if they cannot, after all, agree upon a definite *corpus* of doctrine. So, ten years ago, the Archbishops set up a Commission of all sections of their flock with this end in view. This Commission issued its eleventh annual report last month, in which it foreshadows the end of its labors, and adds:

It [the Commission] is increasingly encouraged to hope that its work may be effectual in demonstrating the existence of unity of belief throughout all sections of the Church of England, underlying even some of the most persistent controversies.

A pathetic optimism surely, for what basis can there be for unity of belief in suprasensible truth but an authoritative voice, divinely commissioned to teach with exactitude? What is there left for those who have closed their ears to that Teaching Voice by repudiating the successor of St. Peter and the Church founded on him? Even if the Commission finally agrees upon a definite Anglican creed, and even if—how impossible it sounds!—the entire bench of bishops unite in declaring it authentic, the members of that Church will feel just as free to pick and choose their personal faith as they are today. The fact is notorious. Anglican doctrines do not bind in conscience, because all they have behind them is human opinion. Attempts are occasionally made to fix the stigma of heresy on this or that rejection of Christian faith, but they never succeed. The heretics flourish and are given preferment. Modernism, the claim to make reason the

final judge in matters of supernatural revelation, has so strongly entrenched itself in the other two branches of the Establishment, that Dr. Major, a leading Modernist, can boast with truth that "all the leading English Churchmen of the Catholic and Evangelical Schools are Modernist to-day."<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding all this, so essential is the Note of Authority felt to be in a Church claiming to be Christ's, that the Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at the opening of the Oxford Movement Centenary celebrations, claimed it again in the words: "The Church of England derives its authority, not from being by law established, but from being the divinely instituted, historic, Catholic Church." But the historic Catholic Church has always known what to teach, and has taught it as morally binding on the conscience of her members. When has Anglicanism done the like? How can it, without any fixed and certain standard? Dr. Barnes, as truly an Anglican bishop as the Primate, speaking of a recent Modernist book, said: "I cannot affirm that the book is orthodox, for I know of no criterion of orthodoxy by which I ought to test it," and even the Primate himself claimed that "the Holy Spirit is ever leading us to new [*i. e.*, different] interpretations of old truths." This is common form with Anglicans, faced with the chaos of Anglican theological opinion, but the attempt to throw the blame for such confusion on the Spirit of Truth Himself seems, surely, to savor of blasphemy.

The endeavor to have it both ways to assert independence of judgment and to claim teaching authority for their Church, has inspired Anglican writers to form the most ingenious theories. The able leader-writers of the *Church Times* are prolific in them. In a recent issue, one of them, endeavoring to rebut Dr. Major's charge of Modernism, tries to indicate, incidentally, what he thinks really constitutes authoritative teaching in Anglicanism.

The Church of England teaches the concurrent authority of Holy Scripture, of reason, of tradition, of the present consensus of the Church. (October 6th.)

Accordingly, whoever wants to know what is of faith in the Establishment has his work cut out for him. He must con-

<sup>4</sup>Letter to the *Church Times*, September 1, 1933.

sult the Bible, his own sense of what is right, the traditional doctrine, and finally the common declarations of the Church! What Church? Not the Anglican, for that, as we have seen, has not yet come to any doctrinal agreement.

For the single clear trumpet of the true teaching Church, the writer would substitute a discordant orchestral. It is strange to what lengths of self-deception the attempt to justify an illogical position will lead even the learned and zealous. All this juggling with words and ideas springs from the desire to identify the Elizabethan Establishment in some substantial way with the Marian Catholic Church which preceded it. In spite of radical diversity in faith, worship and government, continuity must be somehow asserted, or else the true nature of Anglicanism—a man-made body without Orders, Mission or Authority—will be laid bare. It is on this account that the constant exposition of the events of that one fateful year, 1 Eliz., or A. D. 1559, is incumbent on all Catholic apologists, and may be an excuse for the above trite declaration of facts and principles.

It is a year from which Anglican apologists have just as constantly turned their eyes. A recent excellent article in the *Downside Review* (April, 1933), called "The Tractarian Blind Spot," showed up the amazing insensibility of Newman and his first followers to the real facts and effects of the Elizabethan Reformation, which anticipated, and indeed, exhibited in a far more flagrant form, the very same abuses that they were combating in their own day. The Liberalism which laughed at tradition, the Erastianism which wholly subordinated Church to State, were not the growth of the eighteenth century: they were inherent in Anglicanism from the start. Who ever tampered with sacred traditional dogma so freely as Cranmer and his fellow-heretics? Who were ever so subservient to the civil power in spiritual things as the Elizabethan bishops? The Tractarians took for granted, in their surprising ignorance of the facts, the continuity between the Marian and the Elizabethan Churches; so, with equal contempt for historical truth, have Anglicans of every shade done ever since.

It is well known that they have been encouraged in that illusion by some few careless or ill-informed Catholic writers, mainly abroad, who have never been able to distinguish between the schism under Henry, and the apostasy under

Elizabeth. Yet that distinction is vital in the Anglican discussion: there is a world of difference between a Church in schism, especially when lapse of time has made the schism generally inculpable, and an heretical body which was never a part of the Church Catholic. Although schism is very liable to lapse into heresy, still a schismatic Church possesses Orders and the One Sacrifice, and, for the sake of souls inculpably involved in it, the true Church supplies what jurisdiction is necessary therein for the due reception and administration of the Sacraments. One can speak of the "reunion" of a Church in schism with the true Church, for they were formerly united, *ex hypothesi* there is no difference of doctrine between them except in the matter of Catholic unity, and they possess a similar ecclesiastical status. Thus the Henrician schism was readily healed under Mary because, although, during the reigns of Henry and Edward, Cranmer and others had done their best to overthrow the Catholic faith, their heresies had made little way amongst clergy and people, and the country on the whole was still Catholic in faith and practice. But Elizabeth's "Device for the Alteration of Religion" was more successful. Not only was the complete severance from Rome, the source of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, reëffected, but the Catholic hierarchy was dispossessed by civil law in favor of an order of bishops invalidly consecrated, a new canon of belief replete with heresies was enforced, and a form of worship set up substantially different from the traditional Catholic use. These are undeniable facts obvious to all who can read. Yet we have constantly had to deplore interpretations of them, set on foot by Continental writers of whom the late Abbé Portal and certain monks of Amay were the most conspicuous. We had hoped, indeed, that, after the failure of the mistaken Malines Conversations, and the subsequent publication of the Pope's Encyclical on "True Religious Unity" (1928), we should be spared any further ill-informed attempts to rewrite English ecclesiastical history. It is, therefore, the more to be regretted that our esteemed contemporary, *Etudes*, should have published (September 20th) an article on the Oxford Movement Centenary by a writer whose incompetence has been exhibited already more than once, and who now shows that he has learned nothing from his previous mistakes. He takes, without question, the

High Anglican view that the Establishment dates from the schism of Henry VIII, and discusses it as if it were a Church in a canonical sense, capable, *positis ponendis*, of being united with Rome. He voices with sympathy the plea of the small pro-Roman section of Anglicanism who "know" that their Orders are valid, who have no intention of quitting the "Church of their Baptism," and who hope for "corporate reunion," yet would make terms with the Holy See. He represents the natural yearnings of the Popes for the return of all wanderers to the Fold, as if they envisaged such chimerical policies, and twists words spoken by Leo XIII, in 1895, respecting union with the schismatic East, as if they applied to the Establishment which is not a Church. That, indeed, has been the mistake of all these foreign writers, natural enough until they looked into the question but not so excusable afterwards, that they regarded this great national Church—with its imposing array of forty-three diocesan and twenty-nine suffragan bishops, with its far-flung affiliations wherever the English language is spoken, with its numerous and learned clerical dignitaries, Archdeacons, Deans and Canons, with 20,000 beneficed and unbenedicled clergy, distinct in function and garb from the laity, with its growing cluster of religious Congregations, with its missionary activities, with its magnificent Cathedrals and stately worship, and, let us add, with its notable spiritual and philanthropic zeal—as in some real sense a canonical Church, capable of being dealt with by Rome on grounds of equality. But that is just what it is not, and no good can come from disguising or ignoring the fact. If there were any people who knew the real character of the Elizabethan Settlement, and how alien it was in form and substance from the old Church whose place it took, it was the Catholic bishops then extruded from their Sees, who endured penury and imprisonment till death rather than compromise the Faith by submission, or those many faithful confessors and martyrs who, during this and subsequent reigns, gave life and substance in its defence. This cloud of witnesses the *Etudes* writer, as do the Anglican authors on whom he relies, puts wholly out of court. His knowledge, indeed, of the course of events may be gauged by the sentence (p. 645)—"Depuis le schisme d'Henry VIII, l'Angleterre, assimilée aux pays de missions, était gouvernée par un

vicaire apostolique"—a short-circuiting of history which would be laughable, if it had not been admitted into a learned and responsible periodical and thus become liable to mislead foreign opinion. With the best of intentions, writers of this sort—there are some in Germany, too—are doing much to hinder the cause they have at heart—the conversion of Protestant England. The idea that the Establishment is really a Schismatic Church, forced originally into separation and held in present bondage by an irreligious State, with the chimerical hopes of reunion *en masse* which that notion engenders, is founded in error, an error which has to be abandoned in the case of each individual who is converted. And if this mistaken view is expressly encouraged by Anglicans to prevent individual secessions, how can it be otherwise than an obstacle to the salvation of souls? And how grave is the responsibility of those Catholics who gloss over, or actually share, the mistake?

The resuscitation of these fallacious "corporate reunion" dreams, already condemned by Rome when, in 1864, it forbade Catholics to remain members of the "Association for the Promotion of the Union of Christendom," on the precise grounds that it involved heretical views about Church Unity,<sup>5</sup> has obviously been inspired by the Manifesto against "Anglo-Catholic" Modernism published a year ago by some fifty clerical signatories, the significance of which this periodical has already discussed.<sup>6</sup> The signatories have followed up their protest by the publication of a series of historical tractates, designed to show that the Catholic Church in England, with which they wrongly consider Anglicanism to be in substantial continuity, was "Roman" from the first, and would have remained so visibly and always if she were allowed her way. These papers are meant for Anglicans and, up to a point, they say very well what Catholics have been saying all along. But at the end of No. V, "What does the XVI Century say?", the author, the Rev. Spencer Jones, in the two pages he devotes to Elizabeth, tells us absolutely

<sup>5</sup>Those who, like the late M. Thureau-Dangin, try to make out a difference in policy and view between Cardinals Wiseman and Vaughan in this matter, forget that Wiseman's attitude completely changed when he realized all the implications of the A. P. U. C. and that the Roman condemnation was founded on his own strongly adverse report. See Ward's "Life," Vol. II, p. 479.

<sup>6</sup>The Month, December, 1932, p. 553; April, 1933, p. 357.

nothing about the deposed bishops and the recusant clergy and people who remained true Catholics in communion with the Holy See, whilst heretics without Orders or mission took their place as the Church of the land. No amount of subsequent realization of the need of spiritual jurisdiction and of the importance of communion in doctrine and worship with the Church of the Ages, such as is illustrated in the subsequent tractates, can bridge over that fatal gulf. Anglicanism would have to be *made* a Church and provided with valid Orders and the authoritative Catholic *corpus* of belief, before the question of union with Rome could even be contemplated. It does not matter what individual divines, centuries after the event, have maintained. The Catholic priests and bishops in Elizabeth's time knew too well that the religious system which supplanted them was new and was false. It is no less false still, though several hundred years older.

In any case, the pro-Roman section of Anglicanism, asserting with such courage and zeal an impossible position, is but the extreme fringe of a section which itself is in a minority in the Establishment, which again embraces now hardly a moiety of the English population. The signatories are said to have multiplied their adherents by six since the Manifesto was published—still, they form a tiny percentage of the whole clerical body. The last tractate to date—“What are *we* to say?”, by the Revs. W. Fynes-Clinton and R. Corbould, is an amazing mixture of shrewd criticism of existing Anglicanism with the most unwarrantable interpretations of its historical past. The authors challenge a valid answer to their contention that the old Catholic Church in England was forced into schism by the State. The answer, of course, is—True, regarding what happened under Henry, but false regarding Elizabeth's action. She all but destroyed the Catholic Church in England, and so as to render its return impossible, set up another and a different one literally in its place. They seem unable to grasp the idea that Elizabeth so far succeeded: the old Church lived on as a persecuted remnant, until its recovery of normal canonical status in a happier day. It has never fallen into schism or heresy: it has never lost its vital connection with Rome. If these zealous men doubt this, let them write the two all important tractates they have somehow omitted from their series—“What did the Elizabethan Bishops say?”, and “What did

the English Martyrs say?" Detailed and candid answers to these two queries would show them how flimsy is the foundation on which they base their whole case, and which forces them to declare Anglicanism to be "a schism *within* the Church, not *from* the Church"—surely a distinction hitherto undreamt of by theologians!

It is strange that a misreading of history should keep men, who have realized the whole contents of the Catholic faith, even to the *de jure* Supremacy of the Pope, and who feel acceptance of it to be a duty, lingering in an heretical communion. Why should loyalty to that communion transcend the higher loyalty which they owe to God's Truth? And, as we asked them before—why, having expressly acknowledged that the Church has *for ever*, as its Center and Guide on earth, the successor of St. Peter, do they act as if the Papacy were in their regard out of commission?

## A Son's Experience

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*Reprinted from the Journal of Religious Instruction (Chicago), September, 1933.*

IN the March issue of the *Journal of Religious Instruction* there appeared an excellent article under the title of "A Mother's Experience." It occurs to me that possibly "A Son's Experience" might prove interesting to the readers of this magazine.

I am one of five children. Our home was in a rural district, near a small Kentucky town, in a non-Catholic community. In this town was a small Catholic Church, in which Mass was said once a month. My mother died at an early age, and my father henceforth fulfilled the office of both father and mother. His work kept him away from home most of the day.

The only school available was a small one room, country district school. My father said we would learn more "devilment" in that school than anything else, so he decided, with finality, that we would have school at home. Before leaving for his day's labor he assigned a daily task in work and in lessons. At night he inspected the work, and "heard" and

explained the lessons. The subject matter of study included the three R's plus a fourth R. In this way I completed the first seven grades of elementary education. Subsequently I spent a year under a private teacher, and then entered high school, college and seminary.

In this paper I am not concerned with the way in which my father taught the three R's, but only the fourth R—religion. As for textbooks on religion, in those days we knew nothing of an intelligible catechism. At first we had the old "yellow back" catechism. At the age of eleven I knew it "by heart." My father said, "Learn it," and his word was supreme law as far as his children were concerned. As I see it now, I did not understand much of what the wording of this catechism implied. To give one instance: I recall having pondered many times over this definition of a sacrament: "A sacrament is an outward sign of inward grace, a sacred and mysterious sign or ceremony ordained by Christ by which grace is conveyed to the soul." After the "yellow back" catechism, I was introduced to the formidable *Number 2, Baltimore*. I never did understand very much of its imposing array of theological technicalities until after I had spent several years in the seminary. I recall that more than once whilst reciting the long religious formulas and definitions contained therein, my father would look very grave and puff with great force at his pipe. The priest attending the mission said that the catechism should be "learned." We memorized it, even though we *learned* very little of it.

After the ordeal of recitation, my father's practice (to use his own words) was "to tell us about the lesson so we could understand it." He would tell us about the subject matter in words with which we were familiar, often using homely comparisons and illustrations by referring to horses, garden plants, the neighbors, etc. In connection with the catechism text, occasionally he stopped and consulted Webster's *Unabridged Dictionary*. He never gave us a chance to forget the first chapter of the catechism: "that whatever else we do, our big work on earth is to get to heaven." There was not much about the life of Christ contained in the catechism text, but after I entered the seminary and began studying biblical history I discovered that I had already acquired, from my father's instructions, a good knowledge of the life of Christ and of the establishment of the Church. With

great feeling he would say, "Our Holy Father takes Christ's place on earth, and hence we must have great respect for him, and no matter what happens we will always have the Church with the Pope at its head."

In connection with the commandments, he would make up "cases of conscience," using the names of the children or of the neighbors as make-believe principals concerned. As for the sacraments, I could not understand what the catechism meant about the "sacred and mysterious sign or ceremony by which grace is conveyed to the soul," but I did understand what my father meant when he said: "The sacraments are seven great ways given us by Christ to bring grace into our souls."

As for studying such prayers as the Our Father, Hail Mary, Acts of Faith, Hope, Love and Contrition, the Mysteries of the Rosary, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, we learned all these from hearing them said aloud. From my earliest remembrance these prayers were said as a part of morning and evening prayers. On Sundays on which we had no Mass, my father called the household together and read the "Mass Prayers" from his prayer book. . . .

I rather think my father never studied pedagogy out of a book, but I think he mastered its principles to a high degree of perfection. Briefly, his method was to present the principles of religious belief and practice in language we could understand; he illustrated things obscure by comparisons and examples; when he spoke of catechetical terms he explained them one by one; he talked about one thing at a time, and went from the known to the unknown. He set us a good example by his manner of life and saw to it that we lived our Religion. He made it clear that in so doing we were not "tin angels" but performing a commonplace duty that we owed to God in order to save our souls. He did not stop with teaching religion; he taught us the three R's together with the basic principles of agriculture, domesticity and mechanics. How he taught these things is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that he stressed the correlation of all phases of education from dishwashing to mechanics, and from play to the sublime mysteries of religion. In this way he engendered and fostered the "religious atmosphere" of which so much is being said and written.

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